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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE  
12 June 1953

INITIAL WORLD REACTION TO THE EAST GERMAN  
POLITBURO DECISIONS

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USSR

TASS reported briefly the SED Politburo's recommendations to the East German government on measures to "radically improve the standard of living and to strengthen the legal order of the Republic." There has been no Soviet comment as yet.

Eastern Europe

The Satellite media have made no reference to the new decisions regarding East Germany.

A Yugoslav broadcast suggested that the shift in East German affairs may be a result of a Soviet desire to neutralize Germany and "to create more favorable conditions for the Soviet representatives in the eventual future talks on the solution of the German question."

East Germany

Premier Otto Grotewohl, in a speech to a teachers' rally in Berlin, declared that his government was "bitterly and seriously determined" to help bring about a unification of Germany now. As an example, he said "hundreds" of teachers who have lost their jobs in Communist purges would be reinstated, and a new law for reorganization of the high school system will not be put into effect...

On 11 June a meeting of the permanent delegation of the International Conference on the Peaceful Solution of the German Question opened in Berlin. This conference will probably exploit the German unity theme.

West Germany

West Berlin newspapers stressed that the GDR was forced to give up socialization because of the catastrophic supply situation.

State Department review completed

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One paper commented that these East German moves are "mere propaganda which might become dangerous to Western politicians," while another looked upon the pro-church measures "not as a concession but as a restoration of justice."

Bishop Dibelius, head of all German Protestants, said that while further developments would have to be watched, it was not fair "to doubt the seriousness and honesty of Grotewohl's assurances."

Political leaders in Bonn are cautious in their initial reaction to the latest relaxation of controls in the Soviet Zone. Since they believe that this is only the beginning of a series of moves designed to give the appearance of good will and sincerity in creating an atmosphere for Four-Power talks, their general attitude, like that of the Chancellery, is one of watchful waiting.

Both the Foreign Office and Parliament circles feel that these steps were motivated by two main factors: (1) an endeavor to influence German elections, French and British public opinion and the Bermuda conference; and (2) temporary relief from current economic, social, and religious difficulties in the zone.

Though government leaders are not anxious over the situation, they do not underestimate the dangers that may arise during the West German electoral campaign from a series of moves by the Kremlin. Some political observers anticipate that Semenov will take the initiative soon to establish contact with the high commissioners in order to stimulate German hopes for unification and that shortly before the West German elections Moscow will reply to the Allied note, ostensibly making far-reaching concessions.

The Chancellery has informed US officials in Bonn that the government is preparing a counter-campaign designed to keep alive distrust of the Kremlin's real aims.

#### France

The neutralist-oriented Le Monde commented that the East German measures are undoubtedly caused in part by the serious economic situation and the continuing exodus of refugees, and are thus largely an admission of failure.

It cautions, however, that one "should not blindly reject" the official explanation that these measures are intended to

facilitate reunification; that if the decisions are confirmed by deeds, the chances of a Four-Power conference will rapidly increase; that continued Sovietization of East Germany has until now been the most serious reason why the West doubted the sincerity of the East Germans' reunification propaganda.

Le Monde concluded by noting that the Russians have deliberately chosen this moment to renounce also their claims involving Turkey, the announcement of which immediately after the last war ushered in the cold war. It warned, however, that "we had better wait and see" if the latest announcement means the end of the present struggle.

#### United Kingdom

The new economic reforms announced by the East German Socialist Unity Party are interpreted in most papers as indicating that the Soviet government is preparing a big move to prevent West German rearmament by initiating proposals for the unification of Germany.

Telegraph's Bonn correspondent sees the reversal of policy as a drastic but only minor move toward a complete change necessary for free elections in East Germany.

A London Times editorial sees different Soviet policies in Germany and Austria. In Austria, the way is being opened for agreement on real Austrian independence. In Germany, however, simply a modus vivendi to diminish tension and increase trade between the zones is being sought.

#### Turkey

A Turkish commentator told the home audience that the new cooperative Soviet move in East Germany and Austria indicates that "the Soviets desire to show that they are following a course of concessions -- a course adopted by Westerners years ago."

It should be pointed out, he added, that "all gestures they have made thus far have cost them very little and, as many examples in the past demonstrate, the Soviet leaders can always easily take back with one hand what they have given with the other."